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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone) **DATE** 16 October 1978
SUBJECT Detective Agencies in Berlin **Review Date** 2008

This document is hereby regraded to CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the letter of 16 October 1978 from the Director of Central Intelligence to the Archivist of the United States.

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SUPPLEMENT

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EVALUATION OF CONTENT

SOURCE

1. There are at present ninety-four detective agencies in Berlin, employing a total of approximately 850 detectives. During 1939, in comparison, there were 150 agencies employing 1,300 detectives. Since no official approval is necessary for the opening of an agency, the number is now gradually increasing. A number of questionable persons have taken advantage of this lack of control, and the old established agencies in Berlin are attempting to discredit the shady newcomers.
2. The largest and best-known Berlin detective agency is that of Max Pelzer, Berlin W., Rankestrasse 23 (British Sector). Pelzer's fees are high, but he has an excellent record. Twenty detectives between the ages of twenty-four and fifty are regularly employed by him, each earning an average monthly salary of between 350 and 400 RM. Except for occasional rewards from clients, his detectives receive bonuses only under exceptional circumstances. Pelzer avoids hiring former policemen or police detectives, claiming that they lack the proper feeling for private investigation. He has been in the business for twenty-five years, formerly specializing in grand larceny cases. Since the summer of 1945, criminal investigation assignments have been crowded out by investigations of the whereabouts or party affiliations of former Nazis. Pelzer has also been engaged by Nazis to procure defense evidence for denazification proceedings. In addition, he has a number of current assignments from large concerns to report on employees who are diverting company goods to the black market.
3. Fritz Jandt, the head of a new detective agency at Berlin-Zehlendorf, Postweg 38, is a former police commissioner. He founded his agency in October 1946 and has seven regularly-employed detectives and a substantial list of clients. His detectives earn approximately 400 RM a month. Although Pelzer avoids working with the police whenever possible, Jandt, because of his contacts with former associates, says he works quite well with them. His work is chiefly in the field of divorce cases.
4. Kretzadler, the proprietor of a detective agency in the Soviet Sector at Oranienstrasse 176, is known to work with the MVD and the Russian komendatura. It is claimed that some of the detectives from this agency work directly for the MVD as agents, earning 800 RM per month thereby. Kretzadler was in considerable financial distress until early in 1946, when his firm, presumably as the result of Russian support, entered into a period of inordinate prosperity.

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5. The oldest detective agency in Berlin is that of Kurt Arend at Potsdamerstrasse 159, opposite the Sportpalast. This firm was founded forty years ago and is now celebrating its anniversary. Arend boasts that his agency was the first to have its telephone privileges restored in 1945. He has sixteen regularly-employed detectives, and is the only Berlin agency owner to have opened branches in all the occupation zones--for him a matter of reopening his former branches. His Soviet Zone branch office in Leipzig was closed by the police on 16 July, his representative in Mecklenburg is being held by the police, and he believes similar action to have been taken in Magdeburg and Halle.

6. At the present time, detective work in the Soviet Zone is considered dangerous. Saxony began in May 1947 to forbid all activity of Berlin detectives in that province, and it is expected that the other provinces of the Soviet Zone will shortly follow suit. In July 1947 all detective agencies in Saxony and Thuringia were closed down, and their files were confiscated. Some of the agencies were reported to have been closed down by German police, but the larger agencies in Leipzig were said to have been closed by MVD troops. Pelzer has had three employees picked up by the Russians in the last three months, and has heard nothing further of them. Jandt complains of the difficulty of working in the Soviet Zone; he said his difficulty, however, is not with the Russians, but rather with the German police. As a rule he personally undertakes the Soviet Zone assignments. His favorite cover in going into the Soviet Zone is to pass as a Berliner out scrounging for food. For the most part, [REDACTED] 25X1X

25X1X [REDACTED] the German police in the Zone have photographs of all Berlin detectives, and such detectives are immediately arrested when recognized.

7. Pelzer claims that although the Russians have tried several times to maneuver him into an arrest, he studiously avoids entering the Soviet Sector. Recently, according to Pelzer, a Russian major in a large BMW automobile stopped before Pelzer's house and urgently asked him to accompany him to Potsdam. The major's story was that his valise had been stolen and that he wanted Pelzer to find it. He promised Pelzer a large reward and even offered him 10,000 RM in advance. Pelzer, however, begged off, giving the press of business as an excuse. Arend has also had similar experiences with Russian officers from Weissensee and Karlshorst and has had the same stolen suitcase lure used on him.

8. According to Arend, the Russian action against detective agencies results not only from the usual Russian mistrust of undercover activities, but also from the fact that much stolen property has tactlessly been traced by smaller Berlin detective agencies to the hands of Soviet officers, soldiers, civilians, dependents, or camp followers.

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25X1X Comment: [REDACTED] For further information on detective agencies in the Russian Zone.)

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